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Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

Strengthening of United Nations security coordination

Note by the Secretary-General

Summary

The Secretary-General proposes the establishment under the regular budget of a full-time post of United Nations Security Coordinator at the Assistant Secretary-General level. This would be in line with General Assembly resolution 54/192 of 17 December 1999 and would respond to the most immediate needs for strengthening the security and safety of United Nations system personnel in the field.

The Secretary-General would intend to report the requirements associated with the establishment of the post in the context of the performance report for the biennium 2000-2001.

The Secretary-General intends to submit to the General Assembly in due course a comprehensive plan for strengthening the security and safety of United Nations system personnel.

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1. Since 1992 staff members of the United Nations have come under increasing attack. Many have been detained, harassed, assaulted, raped, taken hostage and killed. Existing arrangements, which were put in place at a time when United Nations staff could rely upon the invisible protection of the United Nations flag, are no longer adequate to ensure that staff members carrying out the mandates of the organizations of the United Nations system are protected to the greatest extent possible. This is an issue that has recently received the close attention of the international community. Profound concern has been expressed by the United Nations membership in various forums over the safety and security of United Nations personnel in the field. Member States have recognized that the problem has attained such a large dimension that it seriously jeopardizes the mission of the United Nations system of securing peace, providing humanitarian relief and promoting development.

2. At its fifty-fourth session, in the context of agenda item 20 on strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian assistance, the General Assembly adopted resolution 54/192 of 17 December 1999 on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel. In that resolution the Assembly recognized the need to strengthen the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator and the need for a full-time Security Coordinator. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to take specific measures to improve the security and safety of United Nations personnel in the field.

3. The General Assembly, in approving the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 in its resolution 54/249 of 23 December 1999, has endorsed a recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions that, in the context of the proposed programme budget, detailed information be submitted on all safety and security programmes undertaken by the United Nations system. The Advisory Committee also requested that information be provided on the mode of financing those programmes and activities and on all staff and other resources. The Committee requested that in the meantime, the organizations of the United Nations system carefully coordinate their security and safety activities at the field level to avoid the potential for a conflict in policy, activities and guidelines that might endanger the security and safety of United Nations personnel and family members.[1]

4. The issue of United Nations staff security was also discussed during the 4100th meeting of the Security Council, held on 9 February 2000. Following those discussions, the President of the Council made a statement on behalf of the Council expressing its grave concern at continuing attacks against United Nations and associated personnel, which were in violation of international law. The statement also expressed the view that improving the security of those personnel might require the development and strengthening of all aspects of the safety and security regime in place; considered it important that a comprehensive security plan be developed for every peacekeeping and humanitarian operation and that, early in the elaboration and implementation of that plan, Member States and the Secretariat cooperate fully in order to ensure an open and immediate exchange of information on security issues; and expressed its belief that it was essential to continue to strengthen security arrangements, to improve their management and to allocate adequate resources to the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel as well as humanitarian personnel (S/PRST/2000/4).

5. In line with the actions of the General Assembly and the Security Council outlined above, the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, has initiated an internal review of the existing security arrangements in the United Nations system with a view to identifying measures for reorganizing the coordination and management of the security and safety arrangements for United Nations personnel, particularly in the field, and for substantially strengthening their policy, legal and operational aspects. A number of measures for strengthening the system of security for United Nations personnel are currently under consideration. These include the use of external expertise to provide advice on this vital issue. Comprehensive proposals for strengthening the security and safety of United Nations personnel will, therefore, be submitted to the Assembly in due course.

6. In the meantime, given the compelling need to respond to the increasingly urgent situation on the ground and to improve coordination of the United Nations system's security-related efforts in the field, the Secretary-General proposes, in line with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 54/192, to establish under the regular budget a post of United Nations Security Coordinator at the Assistant

Secretary-General level on a full-time basis. That level is considered necessary since the Security Coordinator will need to deal frequently with heads of specialized agencies on sensitive and urgent issues. The Security Coordinator would be acting on behalf of the Secretary-General and report directly to him. The detailed responsibilities of the United Nations Security Coordinator are contained in the annex. The presence of a high-level official on a full-time basis will provide the essential focus and leadership for formulating the next stage in strengthening the security and safety system of United Nations personnel.

7. The costs associated with the post have been estimated for an 18-month period (1 July 2000-31 December 2001) at the rate of 50 per cent of the standard salary costs, in the amount of $152,600. In addition, a provision of $30,300 would be required for staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount of income under staff assessment.

8. It would be the Secretary-General's intention to report on the cost requirements associated with establishment of the post to the General Assembly in the context of the performance report for the biennium 2000-2001.

9. **The General Assembly therefore is requested to approve the following specific proposals:**

(a) To establish under the regular budget a full-time post of United Nations Security Coordinator at the Assistant Secretary-General level;

(b) To note that the actual costs associated with establishment of the post will be reported to the Assembly in the context of the performance report for the biennium 2000-2001;

(c) To note that a comprehensive plan for strengthening the security and safety of United Nations system personnel will be submitted to the Assembly in due course.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 7* (A/54/7), para. X.27.

Annex

Responsibilities of the United Nations Security Coordinator

1. The United Nations Security Coordinator acts on behalf of the Secretary-General, to whom he or she reports directly, is responsible for all policy and procedural matters related to the security and safety of United Nations personnel and is responsible for ensuring an effective and coordinated response by the United Nations system to any emergency situation in the areas of United Nations operations.

2. The Security Coordinator formulates detailed recommendations aimed at ensuring the safety and security of United Nations system staff. The Security Coordinator coordinates, plans and implements inter-agency security and safety programmes, prepares reports for consideration by the General Assembly and Security Council as well as the Administrative Committee on Coordination and acts as the focal point for inter-agency cooperation on the issues of security and safety of United Nations personnel. The Security Coordinator initiates discussions with heads of the United Nations agencies, programmes and funds on current and potential security-related problems. On behalf of the Secretary-General, the Security Coordinator attends intergovernmental, inter-agency and other meetings on issues relating to security and safety.

3. The Security Coordinator initiates discussions with host Governments regarding the security of United Nations personnel, including respect for their privileges and immunities, and maintains direct and active liaison with Governments, permanent missions and non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations on those issues.

4. The Security Coordinator undertakes security assessment missions as required and reports to the Secretary-General on his or her findings. On behalf of the Secretary-General, the Security Coordinator takes decisions relating to all aspects of evacuation. Time permitting, the Security Coordinator consults with those agencies whose operations in a country might be affected by decisions relating to evacuation.